

## Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Harry and his neighbor, Joe, often borrowed things from each other. One day, Harry asked to borrow Joe's ladder. Joe said, "Sorry Harry, I've lent it to my son." Remembering a saying that his grandma often used to tell him, Harry said, "Joe, you should never lend anything to your children because you'll never get it back." Joe replied, laughing, "Don't worry, it's not my ladder. It's my dad's."

Dear Friends,

We have been reflecting about stewardship this month. We must have gotten some thoughts about helping one another and caring for one another in our faith journey. Stewardship is a way of life, and we identify our gifts and talents and share them with others.

Today's reading talks about our concerns towards the poor in society. In the first Reading from the book of Amos, the continuation of last week's reading, speaks forcefully against the southern and northern kingdoms who think more of wealth than Yahweh. His prophecy was fulfilled in 587 B.C. when the Babylonian captivity happened. All the elite rich people had a humiliating and punishing exile into Babylon.

In the Gospel, Jesus told this parable to condemn the Pharisees for their love of money and lack of mercy for the poor. He also used the parable to correct three Jewish misconceptions held and taught by the Sadducees:

1) Material prosperity in this life is God's reward for moral uprightness; while poverty and illness are God's punishment for sins. Hence, there is no need to help the poor and the sick for they have been cursed by God.

2) Since wealth is a sign of God's blessing, the best way of thanking God is to enjoy it by leading a life of luxury and self-indulgence in dress, eating and drinking, of course, after giving God His portion as tithe.

3) The parable also addresses the Sadducees' false doctrine which denied the soul's survival after death, and, so, the consequent retribution our deeds and neglects in this life will receive in the next. Jesus challenges these misconceptions through the parable and condemns the rich who ignore the poor they encounter. The parable also offers an invitation to each one of us to be conscious of the sufferings of those around us and to share our blessings generously.

By our presence in the world, we are called to create a society capable of recognizing the dignity of every person and sharing the gift that each person is to the other.

The story is told of a Franciscan monk in Australia assigned to be the guide and 'gofer' to Mother Teresa when she visited New South Wales. Thrilled and excited at the prospect of being so close to this great woman, he dreamed of how much he would learn from her and what they would talk about. But during her visit, he became frustrated. Although he was constantly near her, the friar never had the opportunity to say one word to Mother Teresa. There were always other people for her to meet. Finally, her tour was over, and she was due to fly to New Guinea. In desperation, the Franciscan friar spoke to Mother Teresa: "If I pay my own fare to New Guinea, can I sit next to you on the plane so I can talk to you and learn from you?" Mother Teresa looked at him. "You have enough money to pay airfare to New Guinea?" she asked. "Yes," he replied eagerly. — "Then give that money to the poor," she said. "You'll learn more from that than anything I can tell you."

Let us reflect about how we can share our gifts and talents with others especially with those struggling. Let us be a good steward by changing our lives and following god's ways in our life.